(a) whether a large number of IT professionals are returning India from US;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) how many of them have returned so far during the last year?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (c) Due to current slow-down in the economy many companies in the US are cutting down costs and laying off employees. Some US Companies, who earlier opted for on-site work are now converting these into offshore assignments on cost considerations. However, no precise data is available regarding the number of IT professionals who have returned for mis reasons. As per NASSCOM's estimate about 1000 IT professionals may have returned.

Code red virus in Computers

3436. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the 'Code Red virus' that may affect computers;

(b) if so, what is its likely impact; and

(c) the precautionary measures proposed to be taken to save computers from die virus in Government establishments?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir. The Centre for IT Security, set up by Ministry of Information Technology (MIT) for serving as Computer Emergency Response Team, had already sent necessary alerts to all its clients even before this worm became a menace.

(b) The Code Red Worm may affect some of the Network Service Providing sub-systems. The desktops may be affected indirectly in terms of slower/denial of Internet Access.

(c) The necessary remedial patches to prevent the spread of this worm had already been installed in the Government establishments. Necessary instructions to mitigate the effects of this menace have also been issued to other users.

Cyber Crime Laws

3437. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item,